THOMAS MOULTON

In the early 1800's a baby boy was born in a small town in Northamptonshire, England. As our ancestor, his life was to have a profound effect upon us. To him would come important decisions to make--decisions of such far-reaching effects that they would influence the lives of thousands of his descendants for hundreds of years to come.

Five years earlier across the ocean in America, in the year 1805, the great latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith, had been born. The gospel which he was foreordained to restore in its fulness would reach far across the mighty waters to the native land of our ancestor, Thomas Moulton.

Thomas would have the privilege of hearing and accepting this gospel. If he had the desire and put forth the effort, it was within his power to give to his descendants the rich blessings of birth in America, the promised land. Here, surrounded by the everlasting hills, they might grow up under the guiding influence of the Church and have close contact with the living prophets of God, with apostles, and with other great leaders who would be called to build up God's kingdom on earth. Here they might grow and develop in the ways of the Lord.

Few early pioneers suffered greater privations as a result of making such decisions than did our pioneer ancestor, Thomas Moulton and his family. Yet few were blessed more abundantly because of their faith in God and their desire to serve Him. It took resolution and the sustaining conviction of a deeply religious faith to help him endure the trials and to make the sacrifices which enabled him to leave the home of his birth and give such a choice heritage to his descendants.

The father of Thomas Moulton was William Moulton, born in the small English town of Irchester, Northampton about 1781. Who his parents were, we do not know. On October 19, 1803, when he was 22 years old, he married Sarah Horne, daughter of James Horne and Elizabeth Talbot of Bozeat, Northamptonshire. William had been married only nine years when he died, August 1812, at the age of 31 years, leaving behind his wife and three small sons, James age 6 years, John age 4 years, and Thomas age 2 years. James the eldest son did not reach full maturity, but died in England, 13 May 1823 at the young age of 18 years. John married Elizabeth Draper, joined the L.D.S. Church and came to America, dying in Payson, Utah in 1882.

Our ancestor Thomas was born 10 November 1810 in Irchester, Northamptonshire, England. Because of his father's premature death, Thomas was forced early in life to become a child laborer, living about 14 years with a family named Tunnel.

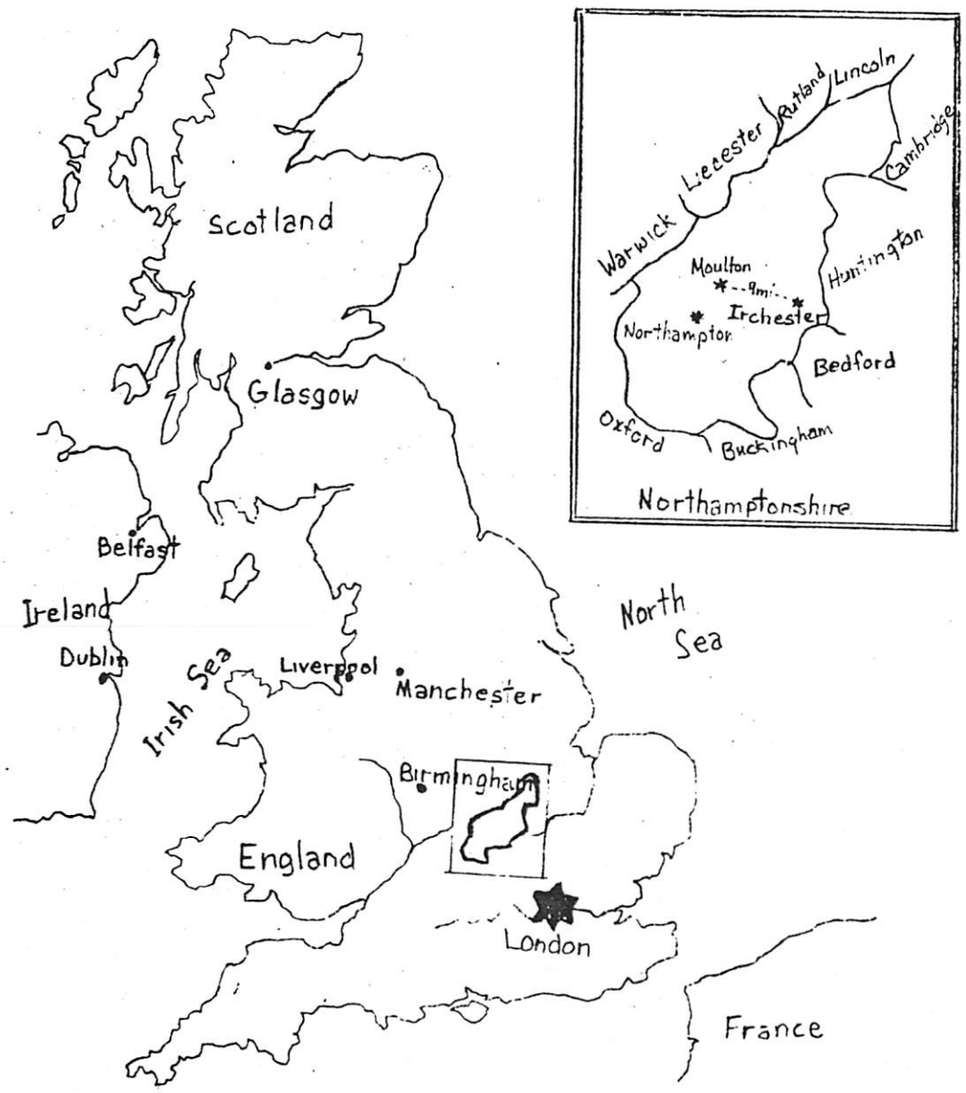
At the age of 22, Thomas married Esther Marsh who was eight years his senior. They had two daughters: Susan, born in 1834 and died two years later; and Sarah, born March 5, 1837 and emigrated to America with her father.

Life was not easy for Thomas, and he was prone to much sickness. After he had "kept house" for awhile he went back to work for his former employer, Mr. Tunnel. Thomas was made

superintendent of the livestock known as the shepherd. He was up late at night and out again by 3 a.m. in the morning. Before he was thirty years old, after only seven years of married life, his wife Esther died, leaving behind her husband and two-year-old daughter, Sarah. Sarah needed a mother and Thomas needed a wife so a year later in 1840 Thomas married Sarah Denton. daughter of Charles Denton and Charlotte Bassfield. Sarah was born June 5, 1818 at Rushden, Northamptonshire. Her father was a small man. It has been said that he was able to walk under his wife's outstretched arm, so short in stature was he.

These were days when great things were happening in the United States and Thomas and his family were to be permanently affected by these events. By the time Thomas was 20 years old, the Prophet Joseph Smith had organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Seven years later on June 13, 1837 Heber C. Kimball, together with other church leaders, was on his way to England. Among the many converts made by these missionaries was the family of a shoemaker John Tingey who later became branch president in the area. Mrs. Tingey was a friend of the Moultons, and she tried to persuade Sarah to go with her to some of the meetings being held by the Mormon missionaries but Sarah was not interested.

One day when visiting at the Moulton home Mrs. Tingey left a tract, "The Voice of Warning" by Parley P. Pratt, lying on the table. Sarah was not home when Thomas came for supper but had spread a simple meal for him on the table and left the tract lying beside it. "That was part of the supper he ate," his descendants were later told. Indeed it was a feast, spiritual food of the choicest kind. When Sarah came home, Thomas greeted her with these words, "Mother, where have we been? Here is the gospel!" The Savior said, "My sheep know my voice." Thomas



had heard and recognized the voice of the Master. From then on they studied the Gospel and joined the Church December 29, 1841. At that time their family consisted of but two children, Sarah age four and Mary Ann just seven months old.

The year 1841 found nine of the Quorum of the Twelve in England. Many of these missionaries visited the Moulton home. It has been speculated that the second son Joseph may have been named for the Prophet Joseph and the third son James Heber for the Apostle Heber C. Kimball. Elder Parley P. Pratt was one of these visiting brethern. Family tradition says that he often cared for their little boys and that years later, when his path crossed that of the Moultons as they journeyed across the plains, he inquired concerning them.

About this same time missionaries of other faiths also visited the Moulton home. They taught the children songs and in other ways tried to interest them but the Moultons were not deceived. The Holy Ghost had testified to them of the truthfulness of the restored gospel.

The spirit of gathering was strong in the hearts of the converts in Europe. Their great desire was to immigrate to America and Utah where they might be with the majority of the Saints. Like many others the Moultons did not have enough money to fulfill this desire. But desire turned into resolution and determination where Sarah was concerned. When her sister Mary Denton immigrated to Nauvoo in 1844, Sarah was determined that she, too, with her family and husband should go. For years she scrimped and saved money in a fruit jar so that when the time came they would all be able to go to America. She carefully resisted all temptation to use her little cache of fund. What a wonderful example she set for her posterity about selecting a worthwhile goal and through patience and determination achieving it.

After the Mormon Saints had been driven to Utah where they finally found a place of their own, converts throughout the world were encouraged to move to "Zion." Like the Moultons most of these converts would never have been able to come to Utah without help. Two programs were set up to help these poor emigrants secure passage. In 1849 Brigham Young set up the Perpetual Emigration Fund. This consisted originally of five thousand dollars which was immediately available to Saints on the frontier and in England. It was the intent of this program that after they had been able to earn money in their new homeland the recipients of the program would return the money to the Fund so that others might also be able to come.

The first to travel with the aid of this Fund did so by wagon train, but this means of transportation was expensive and even with the help of the PEF few could affort it. The use of handcarts was investigated and it was learned that not only could the saints travel much more cheeply with handcarts than with wagons, they could also travel faster.

At last Sarah's day had come, with the help of the PEF and the cheeper means of transportation, her dream could be realized much sooner. What had looked like such an impossibility, particularly with the number in their family steadily increasing, was now within their grasp. To the great surprise of the rest of the family Sarah got out the fruit jar filled with money and the family began the tremendous task of preparing for a trip of over six thousand miles, one that would take about six months.

The Moulton family now numbered seven children, four

girls and three boys all born in the little town of Irchester. For a family of nine it took careful planning to prepare for the trip. To save even more money for the purchases they would need to make, they lived chiefly on barley flour for nearly a year. As the time of departure approached Sarah was expecting a new baby. The baby would be born at sea and Thomas feared for both mother and child. But Sarah had made up her mind to go and, brave, staunch soul that she was, she replied, "Father, we are going. The Lord will take care of us."

Thomas continued to feel hesitant about making the long journey under such circumstances but Sarah could not be pursuaded otherwise. So before they were to leave England one of the brethren gave her a blessing in which he promised her that if she would go to Utah she would make the journey safely without losing one member of her family.

Yet another test of their faith was to come. "Before leaving England our sister was staying with our aunt, and she took the smallpox and died.[1] My sister took it, too, but lived. When we left she had only one pox mark. It was on her left wrist. She had some gloves (which her mother had made for each of the girls to cover the pox and allow the family to pass the health inspection). When we went to be examined before we could get in the ship, Father prayed earnestly that they would not take off both gloves for if they did the mark was so fresh they would not have let us come. God answered his prayer. They did not take off the glove. I consider the whole journey faith promoting."[2]

After passing the health inspection they were faced with the problem of limiting their baggage and reducing what they had considered the bare necessities to a smaller load. After making the difficult decision as to what to leave behind they set sail from Liverpool, England Mar 3, 1856 on the ship "Thornton." The ship had been chartered to carry 764 Mormon converts of Danish, Swedish and English nationality. The saints on the "Thornton" were under the direction of a missionary, James Grey Willie,[3] who acted as their president. There was sadness in all hearts as they departed from lifetime friends and relatives and their native country to make a new home in a strange land, but there was also the joy of at long last being on their way to join the body of the Saints where they might be one in worshipping God.

Just three days after they set sail, and while they were yet crossing the Irish Channel, Charles Alma the Moulton's seventh child was born. He was so small and frail that he was carried on a pillow until after they got to Utah. Later as a grown man, he

---

[1]It was likely "Aunt" Ann Denton who died from smallpox. Family records show she died April 1856, just prior to the time the Moultons left for America. She married William Chapman. It is interesting to note that several of Sarah Denton Moulton's brothers and sisters came to America. Ephraim Denton settled in Pennsylvania. Eliza Denton, who settled in Salt Lake City, married first Samuel Cussley and then William John Hooper.

[2]Sophia Elizabeth Moulton Hicken in a letter to her granddaughter Verda Hicken, dated November 27, 1932. She was 3 years old at the time of the above incident.

[3]Captain James G. Willie had gone with the Saints to the Great Salt Lake Valley in the fall of 1847. From there he was called in 1852 to serve a mission to Great Britain. After his release he was assigned to guide this company of Saints safely to their destination in Salt Lake City.

often jokingly remarked that he was a man born at sea without country or nationality.

For two weeks the sailing was fine. Then the ship ran into icebergs and storm. The vessel was tossed and driven about, rolling and pitching as the angry waves threatened to engulf it. Many became sick during the storm but the Saints took comfort in the promise of the Lord given by revelation to their prophet-leader Joseph Smith.

> And it shall be said in days to come that none is able to go up to the land of Zion upon the waters, but he that is upright in heart....All flesh is in mine hand, and he that is faithful among you shall not perish by the water.[4]

The main food aboard the ship was rice, sugar, musty oats and meat which was white with salt. The food was boiled in salt water and then washed off. The passengers would eat, then clamor for water. No one could get their thirst quenched as the supply of fresh water was too short. Sarah shared her water with her children and as a result had little milk for her baby Charles. Whether that was the cause or not, Charles was thirsty all his life and seemed unable to get enough water to drink.

The sea voyage was not for the faint of heart. The fury of the storm had abated but a new threat terrorized them. A fire broke out aboard ship. Amidst the curling smoke and the acrid funes the missionaries on board advised the Saints to remain calm and pitched in to help the sailors put out the raging fire. The ship was afloat but the fire had not been kind. Raging furiously it had destroyed much of their food supply and reduced the passengers to a rationed diet of sea biscuits and rice for the remainder of the voyage. Yet even the captain recognized the Divine protection, saying he would have gone back had the ship not carried "Mormon" people aboard.

Six weeks after leaving Liverpool the "Thornton" sailed into New York Harbor. In New York the Moultons boarded the train for the long journey westward, going by way of Albany, Buffalo and Chicago. They arrived at Iowa City, the starting point for the handcart companies, on June 26, 1856 only to find that three days before Capt. Edward Bunker's handcart company had pulled away from Iowa City taking every available handcart. Following about two weeks behind the group of emigrants that had come on the ship "Thornton" was another company of poor Saints under the direction of Edward Martin.

> A multiplicity of causes explained the belated arrival. The unexampled clamor for passage to Zion, the difficulty in procuring ships and in making necessary arrangements, and various disappointments and miscalculations account for the failure to meet the planned schedule for departures. As matters eventuated, the lateness of sailings and subsequent delays that would occur at Iowa City and at Florence were to be nothing less than tragic.
>
> Church agents at Iowa City, who had worked hard and successfully to equip and send off the first three handcart companies, now had to struggle frantically to provide for an unexpectedly large body of late arrivals.[5]

---

[4] Doctrine and Covenants 61: 16, 6.

[5] Hafen, LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, Handcarts to Zion, Glendale, California, Arthur H. Clark Company, 1960) p. 91.

Two hundred and fifty handcarts had to be made before all these Saints could continue their journey. Every man that was able was put to work making handcarts. At the same time the women were busily engaged making dozens of tents for the journey. Many of these amateur cart makers did not adhere to specifications but made carts of various sizes and strength. This was to prove a handicap to them, but their most costly error was building the carts of green, unseasoned timber, and in some instances using rawhide and tin for wheels.

> The handcart was made of hickory or oak and sometimes both kinds of wood went into its construction, for the axle must be of strong hickory. The shafts were five to six feet long with three or four binding cross bars from the back part to the fore part of the body. Then there was a space of three to four feet for the lead man, woman, or boy who was to pull the cart. The width of the cart was that of the usual wagon tracks so that it could follow along the wagon tracks as the pioneers journeyed along through meadows of Iowa, the long buffalo pastures of Nebraska, and Wyoming, and the mountainous section of country on their way to Utah. Across the bars were sewn bed ticking or sort of canvas. On this improvised cart was loaded flour, food, bedding, extra clothing, cooking utensils and a tent. The family cart was similar in size, but had an iron axle and surmounted with a box three or four feet long and eight inches high. Two persons were allotted to draw each cart and babies and ill children were given the privilege of riding. Sometimes the cart was covered with a canvas for shade which also formed a covering in case of rain.[6]

After the handcarts were built, there was the task of loading them. They carried not only food to sustain life, but the total earthly possessions of many of the Saints. Often 400 to 500 pounds of flour, bedding, cooking utensils and clothing were loaded on each handcart. Only 17 pounds of personal luggage was allowed each person. With such a meager allowance the Moultons found it necessary once again to leave some of their personal possessions behind.

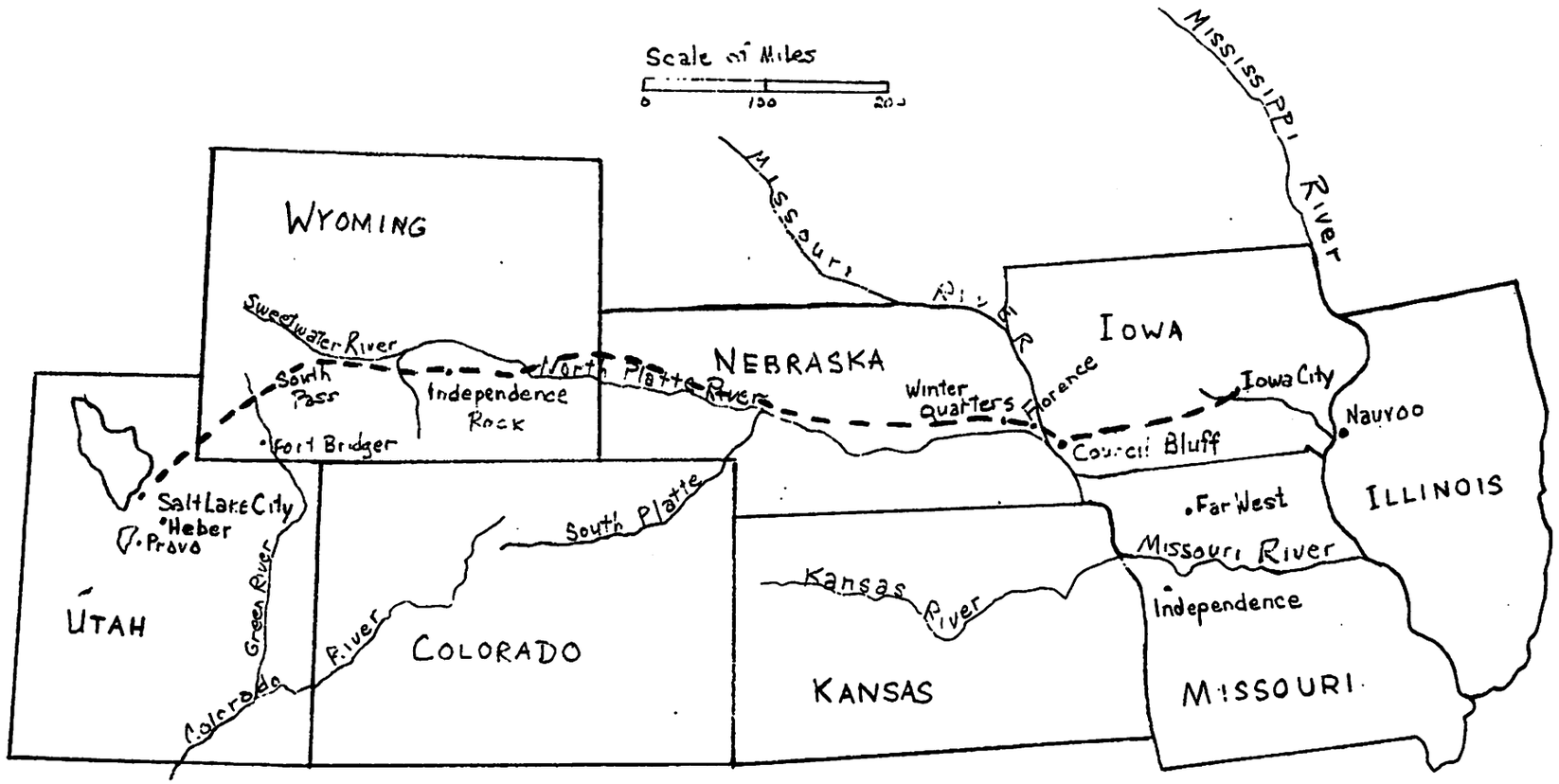
Thomas Moulton and his family were assigned to the 4th handcart company, again under the direction of Capt. Willie. The Willie Company was composed of 500 Saints, with more than the usual number of aged. With them were three cows, a wagon to carry supplies and three yoke of oxen for each 100 travelers. There was a tent for every 20 persons and a handcart for every five. All together there were 120 carts, 5 wagons, 24 oxen and 45 beef cattle and cows.

The Moulton family was allowed one covered and one open handcart. Thomas and his wife pulled the covered cart. The baby Charles, and "Lizzie" rode in this cart. "Lottie" was allowed to ride whenever the cart was going downhill (but complained that she would rather ride uphill). Heber, only seven years old walked behind with a rope tied around his waist to keep him from straying away. The other cart was pulled by the two girls, Sarah 18 and Mary Ann 15, and the two boys, William 12 and Joseph 10.

On July 15, after much energetic labor and a three week's delay, the Moultons bade farewell to Camp Iowa and began their

---

[6]Carter, Kate B., Heart Throbs of the West, (Salt Lake City, Daughters of Utah Pioneers Publication, 1940) Vol. I., p. 73.



The Mormon Trail over which 80,000 Saints plodded between 1847 and 1869 at a loss of some 6,000 lives. Early pioneer companies had to make a trip of better than 1,400 miles, with Nauvoo as the starting place. Later it was possible to travel to Florence by railroad and steamboat. The trek of the Willie Company took 117 days from July 15, when they left Iowa City to November 9 when they arrived in Salt Lake City.

1300 mile journey westward. After traveling 26 days they reached Florence, Nebraska (Winter Quarters) where it was necessary to repair many of the carts. Several days were spent mending carts, taking on new supplies and getting ready for the remainder of the journey. These emigrants impressed the representative of the Council Bluffs Bugle, who wrote the following in that newspaper of August 26:

> A few days since, in company with Colonel Babbitt, Secretary of Utah, and several citizens of this place, we visited Florence, N. T. and there found encamped about 500 of the "faithful," all in good health and spirits . . . we learned that the train had been but three weeks in coming from Iowa City, and that all were healthy, cheerful, and contented.
>
> Having seen several handcart trains pass through this city and cross the ferries at Elkhorn and Loup Fork, we could not help but remark the enthusiasm which animated all classes and ages. . . We saw the butcher (Thomas Moulton was the butcher for this company) dealing out a splendid beef to the crowd and were informed that the allowance was one half pound each, one pound of flour per day, and the usual quantities of molasses, sugar, etc. Many, however, have private supplies, which enable them to live very comfortably.
>
> It may seem to some that these people endure great hardships in traveling hundreds of miles on foot, drawing carts behind them. This is a mistake, for many informed me that after the first three days travel it requires little effort for two or three men or women to draw the light handcarts with its moderate load of cooking utensils and baggage.
>
> It is, also, a fact, that they can travel farther in a day and with less fatigue than the ox teams.
>
> These trains are composed of Swedes, Danes, Germans, Welsh, Scotch, and English, and the best evidence of their sincerity is in the fact that they are willing to endure the fatigues and privations of a journey so lengthy. . .
>
> This is enthusiasm---this is heroism indeed. Though we cannot coincide with them in their belief, it is impossible to restrain our admiration of their self-sacrificing devotion to the principles of their faith.[7]

Here at Florence, the Moultons found it advisable to leave a box of supplies as the load they had to pull for a family of ten was just too heavy. In all they had left excess baggage at the port in Liverpool, England, a box of clothing on board ship, a trunk of clothing at New York City, a trunk of supplies containing most of their personal belongings at Iowa City, and now a box of supplies at Florence. Even on the trail they were looking for ways to ease their burden. Lottie recalled in her autobiography that "one morning Father said, 'Mother, we have just got to lighten out load a little.' So he went through the handcarts. All he could find was the tea pot lid so he threw that away. Mother went and picked it up again."

It was so late in the season before the Willie Company was prepared to leave Florence, that a council was held to decide whether they should go or remain in Winter Quarters till spring. Some who had been over the route strongly cautioned them against the danger of traveling so late in the season. But Captain Willie and the members of his company felt that they should go on knowing that if they stayed at Florence they would be without any ac-

[7] Reprinted in Millennial Star, XVIII, p. 667.

comidations. Among those who cautioned against a delayed trip was Elder Levi Savage, a returning missionary. Elder Savage seeing himself overruled, said: "What I have said I know to be true; but seeing you are to go forward, I will go with you; will help all I can; will work with you, will rest with you, will suffer with you, and if necessary, will die with you. May God in His mercy bless and preserve us."[8]

With short provisions the Willie Company started on their journey again on August 18, thinking they could replenish their supplies at Laramie. In the face of warning they had received, they placed an extra sack (98 pounds) of flour on each cart, which the human draft animals--children included--pulled as bravely as possible. The flour on the carts was used before the flour in the supply wagons, the weakest parties being the first relieved of their burdens. With the extra load on the carts, breakdowns were frequent for about 20 days. Then, with the extra flour used up, the company could once again make better time.

About this time they reached Wood River. The general area was alive with buffalo and one evening the cattle stampeded. Many head were never recovered forcing use of milk cows, beef cattle and heifers in pulling wagons. In addition another 98 pound sack of flour was added to each cart.

Ten days out of Florence they were in the middle of Indian territory and had to be constantly on the alert. One afternoon they came suddenly upon a band of redskins. The frightened immigrants shuddered in their shoes for the Cheyenne Indians were on the warpath that season, killing men, women and children all along the route. Quickly, the company made a camp circle for protection. Closer now came the Indians, yelling and whooping. Were they bent on plundering and killing? To their great relief, the Indians turned out to be friendly. Strangers as they were in America, the immigrants were fascinated by the Indians' dress, which consisted of nothing but a breech cloth for the bucks. The Saints purchased some buffalo meat for a number of trinkets from these friendly Indians and then pushed on.

As was mentioned earlier, Thomas Moulton was the camp butcher. Though weary from each day's trek, it was his responsibility to do the butchering. The immigrants drove the beef until they got "poor" from the trek. Then the worn out oxen would be killed and cut up to supply the Saints with beef. "When a beef was killed the children would burn the hair off, put it on long sticks and roast it till crisp---to them it tasted better than pie does to children today."[9] To make soup, the immigrants cooked hoofs. None of the company, it seems, knew how to catch a good buffalo, so this source of food was denied them. For fuel they gathered dried buffalo chips to burn.

During their travels the Moulton children went out in the fields with their mother, like Ruth of old, to glean wild wheat, to add food to their rapidly diminishing supplies. At one time the family had only barley bread and one apple for every three persons.

About 300 miles west of Florence they barely escaped being trampled under foot by a herd of what seemed thousands of frightened buffalo that came rushing in behind them. The strange

---

[8]"Mr. Chislett's Narrative," in Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints (New York, 1873), 316. John Chislett was the sub-captain of the fourth hundred in the Willie Company.

[9]Charlotte "Lottie" Moulton Carroll from her autobiography.

roaring noise was deafening and frightful. As the buffalo neared the immigrants flapped their coats at them and the buffalo, being still further frightened, divided half of the herd on the right side and half on the left side of the company. Sorely in need of meat the brethren shot at the buffalo as they passed but their shots only served to enrage the bison hit. In all the noise, confusion and immense clouds of dust the men managed to kill only one old bull, the last one that rushed by.

The trials of these Willie Company pioneers were getting more difficult all the time. Provisions were running low. The rickety carts were needing repair. Fear that the entire company would perish prevented even proper ceremonies for the dead. The extra burdens put upon the handcarts because of the loss of wagons and cattle was more than many of the immigrants could bear. Loads had to be greatly lessened by leaving behind more articles of clothing and bedding--which they sorely needed--but which had to be disposed of so that progress could be made. To add to these difficulties, winter set in early that year. And they were approaching the mountains where winter would rage the fiercest and where there would be increased difficulties trying to pull the handcarts and wagons up the steep mountain slopes, and then holding them back as they slid down the deep ravines.

On the 12th of September at North Bluff Creek, provisions ran so low that Captain Willie was compelled to cut the rations to 15 ounces for men, 13 for women, 9 for children and 5 for infants. Just before dusk there arrived in camp a party of missionaries led by Franklin D. Richards, who had been president of the British Mission. When they saw the plight of the immigrants they promised to rush on to the Salt Lake Valley as fast as possible and acquaint Brigham Young and the Church authorities with the sad predicament the handcart companies were in. The next morning after giving the Saints words of encouragement they sang several rousing songs to cheer the spirits of these weakened pioneers, then pushed on toward the west.

Crossing the streams was particularly difficult for the migrating Saints. Some of the streams were swift, with treacherous quicksand beds which could easily engulf them. Twice they had to ford the Platte River--waist deep and several hundred feet wide--with the bottom covered with slippery cobblestones. Prior to making the last crossing of the North Platte, these Saints had to draw their carts through heavy sand all day. The river at this point was wide, the current strong, the water deep and the bottom covered with rocks. Nor was the first crossing at the Sweetwater any better for them.

As they entered Wyoming the company pulled into the "bad lands." The whole country was destitute. Not a tree could be seen, not even a bush larger than a wild sage. It was a land of saleratus and brackish water infested with mosquitoes--a land which smelled "extremely filthy."

On the 30th of September they reached Fort Laramie, 500 miles east of their destination. Here they found plenty of buffalo robes and such few provisions as the Franklin D. Richards missionary party had been able to purchase for them as they passed that way. Watches and jewelry were exchanged for cornmeal, bacon, beans and flour. Yet even with these additional supplies it was necessary for the company to be held on strict ration.

The following day they met Apostle Parley P. Pratt at the head of a group of missionaries who were going east. When he saw the Moultons, family tradition says he asked, "Where are my boys?" It was a joyous reunion for the Moulton family to see him again. That night Elder Pratt delivered a powerful address to the gathering. The missionaries camped with the immigrants

for the night and bade them farewell the next morning. It was the last time these Saints were to see Elder Pratt alive for he was murdered May 13, 1857 as a noble martyr to the cause of truth and righteousness.

Further restrictions were placed on the company. Part of the handcarts became so useless they had to be left by the wayside. The remainder were so heavily loaded that the steep sandy slopes west of Fort Laramie caused the Saints to cache articles of clothing and much bedding by the wayside in order to proceed with greater speed before winter should come upon them.

Quoting again from daughter Charlotte's autobiography:

> One night the wind was blowing very hard and my mother and brothers were trying to pitch the tent. As fast as she would get it up the wind would blow it over again. My father threw his knife and stuck it in the ground and said, "If there is not men enough in this camp to put up my wife's tent I won't kill another beef." Right now there were plenty of men to pitch her tent.

Nights had been getting colder from the time they left Fort Laramie but as they began traveling up the Sweetwater River the nights became very severe. The immigrants struggled on, day after day in misery and sorrow, sometimes going quite a distance and other times being able to walk only a few miles. Many became ill, and deaths increased daily. The early part of their journey had been troubled by mid-summer heat, dust and rains which converted the dust to mud, making travel difficult. Now with the setting in of an early winter they were forced to wade through freezing streams, and sleep in the open with insufficient bedding.

Cold weather, scarcity of food, lassitude and fatigue from over-exertion, soon produced their effects. Our old and infirm people began to droop, and they no sooner lost spirit and courage than death's stamp could be traced upon their features.

Life went out as smoothly as a lamp ceases to burn when the oil is gone. At first the deaths occurred slowly and irregularly, but in a few days at more frequent intervals, until we soon thought it unusual to leave a campground without burying one or more persons.

Death was not long confined in its ravages to the old and infirm, but the young and naturally strong were among its victims. . .

Many a father pulled his cart, with his little children on it, until the day preceding his death. I have seen some pull their carts in the morning, give out during the day, and die before next morning.[10]

Every few days rations were cut. On the 19th of October, while on the Sweetwater River on the tops of the Rocky Mountains, the last ounce of flour was doled out to the hungry saints. During the day the first snow of the season started falling. Cold winds blew the snow furiously about them but they dared not stop. As they paused to rest at noon, a light wagon drawn by two horses drove into their midst. The wagon carried Joseph A. Young and Cyrus H. Wheelock who had been with the Franklin D. Richards company. They had been to the Salt Lake Valley and had returned with the gladsome message that relief wagons filled with clothing and provisions were close behind. Brothers Young and Wheelock urged the Saints to push on no matter what the sacrifice might be as there were more than 1500 immigrants to be rescued as the 16 loads of provisions being brought by the rescuers would not last many days. They then drove on to convey the tid-

---

[10] Chislett, in Stenhouse, op. cit., 321.

ings to the members of the Martin Company.

With renewed hope the company pressed on in the midst of the howling wind and eddying snow. In the rapidly deepening snow they often doubled teams to help move the few wagons they had. Often the strong went back to help those struggling with handcarts and to encourage those who were ready to give up in despair.

By the following morning the snow was 18 inches deep on the level. Tents and wagon covers were smashed by the weight of the snow. During the night the few starving draft animals had scattered in the storm in search of food. Some of them had become lost and a number of them had died of cold and starvation. Worse still five members of the company had died during the night. On this morning the only food for the entire company consisted of several barrels of hard bread, a little sugar, rice, and dried apples, also the carcasses of two broken down cattle. This must last until the supply wagons coming from the west should reach them. Feeding the women, children and sick first, many of the reasonably strong were forced to go without anything to eat at all.

Two miles below Rocky Ridge on the Sweetwater they made camp and waited for relief to come from Utah. Captain Willie and Brother Joseph B. Elder, knowing that all must perish unless help came immediately, went on ahead to urge the rescue teams to hurry. They were gone for three days--three days that shall never be forgotten in Mormon history.

The Saints ate the little food and the two carcasses the first day. The next day more starved cattle were killed for beef, perhaps by Thomas Moulton as he was the camp butcher. But with no bread to eat with the beef, it caused many to become sick. Many of the starving were begging piteously for bread. Children cried because they were hungry and cold. Several died during these three days for want of food. Many of the strong didn't have a bit to eat for two days.

Picture, if you can, our Moulton pioneer grandparents, with their young family, including a frail sea-born baby, existing under these conditons. Your heart, though filled with gratitude and love, cannot help but bleed for their sacrifice and suffering which made possible our birth in this promised land. We cannot fully comprehend the greatness of our debt to these ancestors of ours, who Christ-like placed their all on the alter of the Gospel. Perhaps those of us who knew personally these Moulton grandparents can picture more vividly our debt to them, but it is doubtful.

The Franklin D. Richards party had reached Salt Lake City three weeks after passing the Willie Company on the plains. They immediately reported to President Brigham Young the precarious condition in which they had found the immigrants. The Saints in the Valley had not expected more immigrants until the following year. News of the migrants plight spread like wildfire. The next day, Sunday October 5, 1856, President Young told those convened in General Conference:

> Many of our brethren and sisters are on the plains with handcarts, and probably many are now seven hundred miles from this place, and they must be brought here, we must send assistance to them. . .
>
> I shall call upon the Bishops this day. I shall not wait until tomorrow, nor until the next day, for 60 good mule teams and 12 or 15 wagons. I do not want to send oxen. I want good horses and mules. They are in this Territory, and we must have them.[11]

He asked for men, food and supplies as well. The following day the twenty-seven young men who composed the relief party were called together by the authorities and given their final instructions.

The same bad weather that was plaguing the immigrants slowed their rescuers. On the evening of the 20th, as the exhausted men and animals made camp at a sheltered place on the Sweetwater, Captain Willie and Brother Elder arrived on worn out mules. They brought the news that their company, east of Rocky Ridge, was in a freezing and starving condition and would perish unless immediate relief was given. Teams were again hitched and the rescuers made their way as long as their animals could stand it. At daylight the next morning another start was made and they continued going until the Willie Camp was reached.

> Just as the sun was sinking west of our camp, several covered wagons each drawn by four horses were seen coming towards us. . . Shouts of joy rent the air, strong men wept until tears ran freely down their furrowed and sunburnt cheeks and the little children partook of the joy which some of them hardly understood, and fairly danced around with gladness. Restraint was set aside in the general rejoicing, and as the brethren entered our camp the sisters fell upon them and deluged them with kisses. The brethren were so overcome that they could not for sometime utter a word, but in choking silence repressed all demonstrations of those emotions that evidently mastered them. Soon, however, feeling was somewhat abated and such a shaking of hands, such words of welcome, and such invocation of God's blessings have seldom been witnessed.[12]

The next morning, October 22, Captain George D. Grant with 17 men and 9 teams pushed on to the aid of the Martin, Hodget and Hunt Companies, taking most of the provisions with them, while William H. Kimball with the rest of the outfits started back to Salt Lake City in charge of the Willie Company. Those too weak to pull their handcarts, placed their little outfits in the wagons and walked beside them. Those unable to walk rode in the wagons.

When they arrived at Rocky Ridge another terrible wind and snowstorm fell upon them. As they struggled up the side of the ridge, they had to wrap themselves in blankets and quilts to keep from freezing to death. About forty of these brave pioneers had already perished and others were dying. The weather was so cold that many of the Saints frosted their hands, feet and faces while crossing Rocky Ridge. One woman was blinded by the frost. The weather was so bitter that if a person sat down five minutes he would get sleepy, and in a short time be dead. It was an easy death.

In fancy one might imagine the Moultons, with their brood of eight, to be one of these families, pulling and pushing the two carts assigned to them as they struggled on through the deep snow: the one cart drawn by Thomas and his wife, with its precious cargo of life--Lottie, Lizzie and baby Charles--with little Heber stumbling and being dragged along by the rope around his waist, his limbs so cold that he scarce could move them; the other cart being drawn and pushed by the four older children,

---

[11] Speech of October 5, reported in the Deseret News, October 15, 1856.

[12] Chislett, in Stenhouse, op. cit., p. 326.

encouraging and helping one another.

Little Heber took the brunt of the bitter weather. Perhaps there was not sufficient warm clothing to go around for all. A kindly old lady, seeing the freezing lad's dilemna, grasped his hand as he trailed behind the handcart, held by the rope around his waist, and struggling to climb the slippery slopes of the ridge. This kindly act saved his right hand, but his left hand, being exposed to the sub-zero weather, was frozen. The flesh dropped off his poor little fingers to the first joint. When they reached Salt Lake City, it was necessary to saw off the blackened bones and, as there was no ether or other pain killer, Heber did not even have the comfort of those to buoy him up during the operation.

Each morning they pushed on as rapidly as possible, anxious to get the benefit of the newly broken road before the drifting snow filled it. On the 24th of October after a hard climb, they reached South Pass, where flour and plenty of wood were found at the camp where Reddick N. Allred's rescue team and wagon had stalled. November 1st they met seven teams from Fort Supply coming to their aid and three from Salt Lake City. From then on they met teams every day, but most of them went to the relief of the other parties.

The following day they were filled with joy to find about fifty teams that had been sent from the settlements north and south of Salt Lake to haul them the rest of the way, although many still walked all the way. Up to this time about one-sixth of their number had died since they had left Iowa City on the morning of July 15th.

As they reached the foot of Little Mountain in Emigration Canyon, the Moultons were met by Uncle Samuel Cussley.

> Father and Mother did not know that they had relatives anywhere in Utah. When the relief trains came to meet us one of the men said, "Is there a Thomas Moulton in this company?" and to their surprise it was my mother's brother-in-law by the name of Cussley.[13] He had, oh, so many of the good things that children like, pie, cake, etc, but there was nothing looked so good as the good bread and butter. My Father asked me, after eating a piece of cake, "Lottie, do you want another piece of cake?" and I said, "Could I have another piece of bread and butter instead."[14]

About noon on the 9th of November, William H. Kimball halted his sixty wagons of suffering humanity in front of the old tithing office building where Hotel Utah now stands. Some arrived with their hands frosted. Others had feet frozen to the ankles. Some were frozen to the knees. Captain Willie hobbled into the city with burlap wrapped around his feet for shoes. So badly frozen were his legs and feet that it was thought for a time that he might loose them. Sixty-six of their number had died on this journey.

The company was greeted by hundreds of Salt Lake citizens gathered around anxiously awaiting their coming. In less than an hour from the time that this ill-fated company reached Salt Lake, every man, woman, and child that belonged to it was being ten-

---

[13] Uncle Cussley was Eliza Denton's first husband. Family tradition says she was his fifth wife. Eliza died at the home of Sophia Elizabeth Moulton Hicken.

[14] Charlotte "Lottie" Moulton Carroll from her autobiography.

derly cared for by their temporal saviors.

Charlie, the nursing infant, was a mere skeleton so weak and frail that no one expected him to live. He had been cushioned all the way on a pillow to support his frail body. People came from all around to see him and give his mother warm clothing to cover him and his brothers and sisters. When his pitiful little body was held up to the sun, one could see right through it, so little flesh did he have. Certainly the blessings given to the Moultons before they left England had been fulfilled, for not one member of their family was lost on this perilous journey.

Gratitude and appreciation towards one of the young heroes who had helped save the Moultons from the grasp of death soon blossomed into romance and love for Sarah. On December 5th amidst the happy wishes of her loved ones, Sarah was married to John Bennett Hawkins, a member of the original rescue party. They made their home in Salt Lake City where John was an established blacksmith.

Five handcart companies had arrived in Salt Lake during the summer, autumn and early winter of 1856. This made it necessary to send some of the people to other settlements. About three weeks after the Moultons arrived in the valley they were taken by a man named Moroni to Provo. On the way they camped at Lehi with the Jonathan Clegg family, who became early pioneers of Heber City. Mr. Clegg was a maker of cloggs--wooden-soled shoes.

In Provo the Moultons were taken to the meeting house where they lived for a few days. The citizens of Provo were asked to see the immigrants and help them find employment. A man by the name of William Halladay, a blacksmith and jack farmer, questioned Thomas and found he was the man he needed and secured him to take care of his farm on shares. He also let him have use of his team for hauling fuel for the winter. For four years the family of eight lived in a one-room adobe house. Shortly after they arrived the bishop (they lived in the Fourth Ward) brought the family some squash to eat. Mother Moulton, never having seen squash before, asked if they were chairs to sit upon.

While they were living in Provo the Moulton's eighth child, Thomas Denton Moulton was born, October 29, 1858. He died ten months later.

In the spring of 1860 Thomas began to look for a place of his own. Heber City in Wasatch County was opening up so, at the recommendation of Fred Giles, Thomas went to that valley to do the spring plowing. The rest of the family moved to the valley about July. As the settlers were having trouble with the Indians, they took refuge in the log fort that was built in 1859 and 1860. This fort was located in the northwest part of town, starting on First West and Second North (at the Dewey Moulton home), and running north to Fifth North and west to Third West. It afforded protection to sixty-six families whose cabins were built around the inside walls of the fort. The Moultons built on the southeast corner about the middle of the block.

The Moulton's first home was a two-room log house. They obtained cottonwood from the river and split it to make the roof. The roof was covered first with straw, and then with dirt. When the first rains came, it started to leak. Then they thatched it with straw laid end to end like shingles, each so-called shingle being four to five inches thick. Between the two rooms was a hall, which later became a room. The floor was made of fine willows. Later they had a birch broom. The broom they used, called a "beason," was made of fine willows. The wood was

split, turned down, and then bound to make a broom. Their first light was sagebrush dropped on the fire. Later they used a birch bark, and finally they used a dish of oil with a cotton rag in it.

On September 16, 1860, their ninth child, John E. was born, and three years later, the tenth and last, George Franklin was born March 16, 1863.

After moving from the fort, Thomas Moulton built the rock home now owned by Maud Witt Campbell on Second North and Second West. He and his wife were both systematic and methodical in their work and planning. They did their share in helping to pioneer the Heber Valley.

Thomas' children remembered him as a very strict man. He expected his boys to keep busy. If the boys had some friends stop by after school their father would ask them if they didn't have work to do at home.

The Moultons raised their own flax and made thread from it. The seed from the flax made good animal food. They pressed out the oil, and made 1/2 inch flax seed cakes for the animals to eat. Small rope was also made from the flax. Large rope was made out of hemp. They made molasses from beets and also cut carrots. The first fruit they had was melon rinds. From ground cherries they made preserves. Melon rinds were also used to make molasses. Their early experience of poverty in the old country and along the trail to Utah taught the Moulton family to always appreciate food after coming to the valleys. The early pioneers had to do without much that we consider necessities today. Sophia Elizabeth used to recall how when they first came to Utah, the Moulton children would go skating on the ice ponds with bare feet because they had no shoes.

In 1866 companies were organized to fight in the Black Hawk Indian War. All men between the ages of 18 and 45 were organized according to territorial law. Thomas Moulton stood guard. He was in the John Galligher Infantry Company. Once when Heber was substituting for his father as guard, Captain Willie Wall decided to try him out. He came along on his horse at night. Heber raised his gun, and Captain Wall said, "You will do." Joseph Moulton enlisted when he was 17 in the John M. Murdock Infantry Company and played the snare drum, while William Moulton was a sergeant in the Thomas Todd Infantry Company.

Sarah Denton Moulton died July 7, 1888 at Heber and was buried in the city cemetery. After her death Thomas lived with his son John. Daughter Elizabeth Hicken lived six blocks from her brother and father. Every morning Thomas would walk the short distance to his daughter's home where she would have a small batter pudding baked for him. He would eat it with butter and sugar and say, "Thanks, Lizzie. That was so good--just hit the spot." Then back he would trudge home.

Nearly four years after Sarah's death, Thomas Moulton, a faithful high priest in the West Heber Ward, died April 17, 1892. As had Thomas and Sarah, their sons and daughters continued to give freely of their services in the communities in which they lived. The Moultons were considered one of the staunchest families in the community, and says one writer, "To this day the parents are remembered by the Heber City people as Grandma and Grandpa Moulton."

written by Verda Hicken, great-granddaughter. printed 1973